



News Release

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IDWR STAYS CURTAILMENT ACTION
ON GROUND WATER PUMPING WATER RIGHTS

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State water managers have put on hold plans to issue curtailment orders to about 1,000 persons holding ground water rights in southern and southeastern Idaho, the Department of Water Resources announced today.

IDWR Director Karl J. Dreher made the decision to stay the curtailment orders after junior and senior water right holders informed him that they had reached an understanding on principles for settlement and were finalizing written agreements that would avoid the need for curtailments.

"Representatives of water right holders on both sides of the issue have given IDWR written assurances that the conditions included in the agreements will adequately replace the curtailment actions designed to protect senior water rights. Based on their written assurances, I am satisfied the agreements will be adequate," Dreher said.

Dreher also acknowledged that there likely are water right holders that were not included in the negotiations that have been ongoing since the establishment of two ground water management areas on August 3.

"We will make sure that all those affected will have an opportunity to satisfy themselves as to the actions that have been taken," Dreher said.

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Officially, the process creating the ground water management areas and the accompanying curtailment orders has been stayed. IDWR will resume the process of issuing curtailment orders, however, if the parties are unable to finalize their agreements. Staying the process ensures the legal rights of the parties involved are protected and remain in place in the event further action is needed.

IDWR created two Ground Water Management Areas along the Snake River on August 3. The move was designed to give IDWR the administrative authority to curtail ground water use affecting senior priority surface water rights.

The pumping of ground water can reduce water flowing through springs and to the Snake River, which surface water users with senior-priority water rights are entitled to divert prior to ground water users with junior priority (later in time) water rights.